

Yokai Shift Guide

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Basic Controls (Default Playstation controls)

- Activating Yokai Shift - Strong attack () + Interact () (When Amrita Gauge is full)
- Deactivating Yokai Shift - Ki pulse (R1) + Interact () (Sheath input)
- Guardian Spirit Skill - Strong attack () + Interact () (While in Yokai Shift)
- Quick attack - Quick Attack ()
- Strong attack - Strong Attack ()
- Charged Strong Attack - Strong Attack () (Hold)
- Dodge - Dodge ()
- Ki pulse - Ki pulse (R1)
- Block - Block (L1)
- Absorb Amrita - Ki pulse (R1) + Yokai button (R2) (See Amrita Absorption)
- Yokai Abilities - Yokai button (R2) + Quick Attack (), Strong Attack () or Dodge ()
- Burst Counter - Yokai button (R2) + Interact ()
- **Shadow Step** - Dodge () after Quick Attack () (Feral)
- **Shadow Stab** - Quick Attack () after Dodging () (Feral)
- **Fang Break** - Block (L1) + Strong attack (), press () again for a follow up (Brute)
- **Blood Moon: Yang** - Strong Attack (), press (R1) during the teleport to cancel (Phantom)
- **Blood Moon: Yin** - Aim (L2) + Shoot (R2 while aiming), press (R1) during the teleport to cancel (Phantom)

Overview



Yokai Shift (YS) is a mechanic available in Nioh 2, replacing the Living Weapon mechanic from the previous game. By activating Yokai Shift, the player can transform into one of three powerful Yokai forms. The game doesn't explain how to use YS very well. Remember that it is another tool in your arsenal just like the other mechanics such as Yokai Abilities, Burst counters etc that any build can make use of, and not necessarily a "win" button or something that has to be built around.

There are optimal times to use it such as during a grapple opportunity, or in Dark Realm. Simply shifting as soon as a fight starts may not be the best way to utilise the ability, although the transformation does provide a period of invincibility and the shockwave that is released can push/stagger enemies back making it useful if you are about to be hit.

See the "**Yokai Shift Moveset**" section for further details on each form's moveset, the unique way Anima works while in Yokai Shift, and other subtle interactions. See the "**Amrita Absorption**" section for further details on how Amrita works, recoverable gauge, and the Amrita Cap. See "**Yokai Shift Duration**" section for more details on how duration is calculated and what affects it.

Yokai Shift offers several key benefits:

- Potentially x3 more frequent yokai ability usage due to every Yokai Ability having its own independent Anima supply.
- Burst Counters can be used infinitely, as they do not require any Anima while in Yokai Shift.
- Inability to die while in Yokai form. Activating while at critical health will also cause Yokai Shift to last approximately 16% longer and reduce gauge consumption (attacks, blocking, dodging) by somewhere around 15%, while the activation animation will stagger enemies around you.
- Access to:
 - Guardian Spirit attacks. Attacks unique to each Guardian Spirit, offering elemental options and, for some Spirits, unique properties and effects. Note that weapon Elemental Imbues and Talismans do not affect Yokai Shift, so these Guardian Spirit attacks, along with Yokai Abilities and consumables, including Onmyo and Ninjistus, will be the primary ways of inflicting these debuffs in combat.

- Access to unique abilities for each form: **Fang Break**, **Shadowstep**, **Shadowstab**, **Bloodmoon: Yin** and **Bloodmoon: Yang**.
- Charged Strong attacks. Powerful attacks capable of staggering enemies, granting massive stunlock potential when combined with Yokai Abilities, unique YS abilities and certain Guardian Spirit attacks; even vs some of the strongest Yokai bosses in the game.
- Yokai Shift Grapples. High damage grapples that will generate Anima and Amrita.
- Unique Amrita mechanics in the form of choosing between:
 - Manually absorbing Amrita into your body to extend the Yokai Shift Gauge. Each form has a certain amount of **Recoverable Gauge**.
 - Absorbing Amrita into your weapon to transform it. While transformed, your weapon deals increased melee damage (different for each form) and significantly decreases the time taken for Charged Strong attacks to charge.
- Dark Realm benefits:
 - Unaffected by Dark Realm (and Yokai Realm) ki penalties.
 - Enhanced Anima generation (Also benefits Human form but compliments Yokai Shift's independent Anima supplies).
 - An approximate 40% increase in duration
 - An approximate 10% melee damage increase for Yokai form
 - Yokai Max Ki being easier to drain through the use of Yokai Abilities etc. Not exclusive to Yokai Shift, but feeds into the gameplay loop with Yokai Shift's enhanced Soul Core usage.
 - The use of Yokai Shift in Dark Realm is further facilitated by the ability to enter Yokai Shift directly from a Yokai Shift Grapple, potentially allowing you to transition into Yokai Shift right as the boss enters Dark Realm after recovering from the grapple.

Below are some details on each form:

	Brute	Feral	Phantom
Traits	Slow but wide and damaging attacks. Highest grapple/final blow damage	Quick, low damage attacks. Has the longest combo with the full combo doing decent	Decently damaging attacks with decent speed but fairly linear

		damage	
	Loses the least amount of Gauge when taking damage	Attacks have good forward momentum	Attacks have good range with some (Blood Moon) being projectiles
	Dodge roll - consumes the most ki of all forms	Unique dodge Shadowstep - consumes no gauge. Works with Shadowstab as a dodge offset	Decent, relatively quick dodge - consumes a small amount of Gauge
	Decent Guard but has a unique parry skill in Fang Break to nullify attacks	Weak guard that consumes a lot of gauge	Strong guard that further reduces gauge loss while still having recoverable gauge remaining
	Has Hyper Armour during attacks	Highest duration and recoverable Gauge	Has Hyper Armour during attacks
Unique Skills	Fang Break	Shadowstep	Blood Moon: Yin
		Shadowstab	Blood Moon: Yang
Amrita Cap (Tested with Spirit Stones)	39% Recoverable Gauge	62% Recoverable Gauge	43% Recoverable Gauge
Base Duration	~41 seconds	~47 seconds	~41 seconds
Transformed Weapon ~Damage Increase	x1.3	x1.1	X1.2 (x1.4 for quick attack combo)

Shiftling Skills

- Demonic Discipline (3 ranks) - Extends the Duration of Yokai Shift (**Extended Yokai Shift**) (7%/12%/15%)
- Demonic Ascension (3 ranks) - Increases the amount of Amrita earned while in Yokai Shift (**Amrita Earned (Yokai Shift)**) (5%/8%/10%)
- Demonic Destruction (3 ranks) - Reduces the depletion of the Yokai Shift Gauge when attacking (**Ki Consumption (Yokai Shift)**) (-10%/-16%/-20%)
- Demonic Tenacity (3 ranks) - Reduces the depletion of the Yokai Shift Gauge when taking damage (**Damage Taken (Yokai Shift)**) (-10%/-16%/-20%)
- Demonic Defence (3 ranks) - Reduces the depletion of the Yokai Shift Gauge when guarding (**Guard Ki Consumption (Yokai Shift)**) (-20%/-32%/-40%)

- Demonic Dexterity (3 ranks) - Reduces the depletion of the Yokai Shift Gauge when dodging (**Dodge Ki Consumption (Yokai Shift)**) (-10%/-16%/-20%)
- Demonic Acumen (3 ranks) - Increases the drop rate of items while in Yokai Shift (**Item Drop Rate (Yokai Shift)**) (5%/8%/10%)
- Dark Discipline (3 ranks) - Extends the duration of Yokai Shift while in the Dark Realm (**Extended Yokai Shift (Dark Realm)**) (14%/24%/30%)
- Guardian Bond: Shadow (3 ranks) - Reduces the depletion of the Yokai Shift Gauge when using Guardian Spirit skills (**Guardian Spirit Skill Ki Consumption**) (-5%/-8%/-10%)
- Guardian Bond: Aether - Imbues the shockwave that is produced when activating Yokai Shift with an element determined by your equipped Guardian Spirit

Charging the Amrita Gauge

The Amrita Gauge is filled by absorbing amrita. Amrita can be released from various sources such as killing enemies, looting amrita piles, using spirit stones/inspiring gems, hitting enemies with Yokai Abilities etc.

Not all sources of Amrita fill the gauge to the same degree. Outside of Consumables (e.g. Spirit Stones), the most efficient way to build the amrita gauge is primarily Yokai Abilities and Sacred Bird Cry. Anima bonuses on soul cores are extremely valuable for this purpose.

In contrast, Amrita Gauge gains from killing enemies, extraction, looting etc are very miniscule and inefficient without a Pleiades buff.

E.g: Mezuki will charge ~20-25% of the gauge in a single hit, increasing when hitting multiple enemies. Ippon charges ~15-20% per hit; while a quick, cheap core like Aberrant charges ~4-5%. Sacred Bird Cry charges about 15.5% of the gauge for 4 anima. The gauge fills even faster if you have a Pleiades effect active.

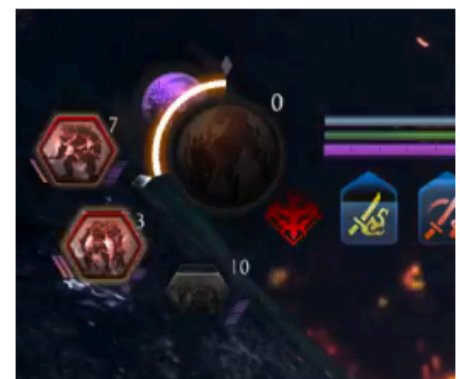
Note: Not all Pleiades effects are the same strength. Saoirse's GS skill gives a huge Pleiades buff around 200%. See: <https://youtu.be/Iky5ufSAxww> to compare extraction Amrita Gauge gains, with and without Saorise's Pleiades buff. It is recommended to use Pleiades over Amrita Gauge Charge, which appears to only affect Amrita gained from killing enemies. Strength of Pleiades effects listed below:



Guardian Spirit lights up and fills as you Absorb Amrita.



Amrita Gauge charged. Notice the coloured graphic that appears.



Amrita Gauge on cooldown. The meter running along the circumference of the GS icon will slowly fill over time.

Source	Strength	Effect
Shuten Gourd	20%	Pleiades (Amrita Absorption)
Mezuki Soul Core	20%	Pleiades (Enemy Killed)
Baku	20%	Pleiades (Amrita Absorption)
Pleiades Talisman	50%	Pleiades effect on use
Shuten Core	50%	Pleiades effect on use
Saoirse	200%	Pleiades effect when using GS attack

Note: Worth mentioning that Pleiades seems to have no effect on the amount of gauge recovered via Yokai Abilities while in Yokai Shift, only the rate at which you build the gauge outside of shift.

When switching between Spirits mid game or after deactivating Yokai Shift, the Amrita Gauge will enter a “Cooldown” period at which point Yokai Shift will be unavailable, represented by a gold meter along the circumference of the GS icon. This meter will slowly fill overtime, but can be expedited by absorbing Amrita. The cooldown is significantly longer when deactivating Yokai Shift, seemingly requiring a full gauge worth of amrita itself. Exiting Yokai Shift while at Critical HP (<30%) also seems to further extend the cooldown period, requiring you to wait longer before the cooldown is completed. Fortunately there are various means and Shiftling skills that allow you to restore the HP of your Human form during Yokai Shift.

Notes: It is also worth noting that there is not an “overflow” on the cooldown, meaning for instance even if you absorbed amrita from a source that usually fills ~25% of the gauge while the cooldown is about to expire, the amrita gains will not carry over to the main Amrita Gauge.

Recovering your GS from your grave will multiply whatever the value of your Amrita Gauge was before dying by x2.

Interestingly, it seems that the rate the Amrita Gauge charges is affected by each piece of gear that you have at max familiarity: <https://youtu.be/3gzwz9P00Vs?si=YWfHFyn2KS5oy3V7>

The Amrita stones are split into three tiers that each generate a different amount of Amrita Gauge. The “Inspiring Gem” item grants an active buff that fills 4% of the Amrita Gauge per tick. With a base, naked, level 1 character, the duration of this buff is insufficient to fill the entire gauge.

Yokai Shift Damage

Link to Damage spreadsheet: [📊 YS damage](#)

The melee damage of Yokai Shift attacks is normalised based on weapon level and weapon + level. E.g. Two different weapon categories (E.g. Sword and Spear), with different base attack and different rarities will deal the same damage as each other while in Yokai Shift provided they are the same level/+level.

The stat “Attack (Yokai Shift)” adds roughly between 10-12 weapon levels worth of damage at its max

rank of +53 on a soul core, although this increase will not be reflected on your weapon's attack value in your inventory.

E.g: Testing a 190 Dancing Blade with 6053 attack vs a 200 Dancing Blade with 6071; smacking Gozuki in Brute form with the first quick attack hit:

200 + 53 Attack (YS) = 7894

190 + 53 Attack (YS) = 7820

200 = 7815

190 = 7741

79 damage difference between adding Attack (YS) vs not, compared to 74 damage difference between a level 200 sword vs level 190.

Yokai Shift damage is affected by Striking/Slashing modifiers (e.g. wooden weapons, Tonfa etc deal 20% less damage but 20% more ki damage).

Yokai Shift is still affected by most melee damage buffs, both active and passive with some exceptions such as Melee Damage (Critical). This also seems to extend to other Critical effects such as Anima Charge (Critical).

While unarmed, Yokai Shift melee damage appears to increase with each mission completed.

Other modifiers to Yokai Shift damage include:

- Transformed Weapon - The magnitude of the damage bonus transforming your weapon provides varies by form, and in some cases, the move being used.
- Dark Realm - Yokai Shift melee attacks seem to get roughly a 10% increase while in the Dark Realm.

Yokai Shift Moveset and Values

- **Soul cores.** A key mechanic of Yokai Shift is that you don't have just one Anima bar, but instead you essentially have **three**, one for each of your yokai abilities, allowing you to fire them off significantly more frequently than normal. Also, since yokai abilities don't consume any gauge, using them as the main offence is a good way to make use of Shift.

Following on from this, you can choose your Yokai abilities carefully and work the different attacks into your gameplay. Think of them as your Yokai Form's customisable moveset. You can choose Yokai abilities based on many things such as stagger potential, elemental application, ki damage, damage, iframes etc. It is also important to note that activating Yokai Shift is one of the few ways to cancel Yokai abilities.

A decent setup that works even with 20 attunement spirits is: **Ippon/Yoki, Aberrant/Oni-bi's,**

Mezuki/Gozuki/Magatsu, but there is room to experiment with other combinations and cores, especially if you are able to roll cores with the -1 attunement effect, or use Spirits with higher attunement limits.



Anima works the same way as in human form. You can see how much anima an ability has based on how filled up the ability icon is. You can also see how many uses of each ability you have by looking at the number of little red charges next to the icon.

Note that the anima you have before entering Yokai Shift has no impact on your starting anima when you do enter Yokai Shift. Your cores instead always start off with about 30-40% of their icons filled.

Matching core type to your Yokai form will cause you to start off your Yokai Shift with your Yokai Abilities with more of their icons filled, around 60%.

- **Yokai grapple**. Can be used to transition into Yokai Shift if you press the Yokai Shift input near an enemy who is able to be grappled. This lets you enter Yokai Shift with your Yokai Abilities charged, or at least partially charged, while dealing damage in the process.

While in Yokai shift, you can use the switch spirit command while near an enemy that is able to be grappled, to switch to your secondary spirit's Yokai form via a yokai grapple; although switching Spirits will consume a portion of the gauge. The grapple animation can also be cancelled using Burst Counters (See the Burst Counter section for tricks using this) as well as through other means, such as by knocking the enemy out of range with an attack while you transform.

Note: What is presumed to be a glitch also exists for certain enemies where activating Yokai Shift after a Grapple in human form can reset the winded state of the opponent and allow for a second grapple. The Ninjitsu items: Umbral Bullet and Exorcist Blade are also capable of this

in place of activating YS.

The enemies it is known to work on include: Kamatachi, Yatsu-no-Kami, Itsumade, Suiki, Yasha and a few others: <https://youtu.be/GShPGmDbyHU?si=pyG71KLyWOAzq6Hc>

Kasha can also be looped infinitely using Brute counter after a Yokai Shift grapple while in Yokai Shift.

- **Basic quick attacks** are mainly used to generate anima, pressure certain enemies who like to block, release some amrita for the weapon's transformation (See Amrita absorption section), or deal a bit of damage to an out of ki (OoK) enemy/deal with fodder. Basic quick attacks consume quite a bit of gauge for only a little payoff so it is ill advised to rely on them as your primary source of damage.

Note: **Feral's** melee attacks consume the least amount of gauge for a single attack although its entire combo consumes the most due to it having the longest string (5 hits). The final two hits of **Feral's** quick attack chain seem to refund a small amount of gauge on hit. Combined with **Shadowstep's/stab's** ability to retain your place in the quick attack string after dodging, and **Feral's** naturally higher amrita cap, quick attacks seem to be more viable in this form.

- **Basic strong attacks** have some utility depending on Form:
 - **Brute's** does decent ki damage/break and can launch humans it knocks OoK, similar to moves such as Odachi's Retrograde flow.
 - **Feral's** is a quick poke that can be useful for closing the distance after dodging attacks etc. Seems to have a "sweet spot" mechanic where it will consume less gauge when hitting an enemy at its max range (actually was refunding 1% of the gauge on hit in some instances), but consumes more gauge (more or less double) if used up close.
 - **Phantom's Blood Moon: Yang**, is a quick projectile with decent range that will automatically teleport you to the enemy. You can combo into this off of a quick attack. The teleport can also be cancelled by holding block after pressing the strong input; or ki pulsed during its animation, which grants a period of invincibility. This move also refunds a very small amount of gauge on hit (must initiate the teleport - won't restore anything if you cancel the teleport via blocking). Also counts as a ranged attack for the purposes of applying ranged hit debuffs and activating anima bonus (ranged hit) which is present on all **Phantom** spirits by default.

Note: There is a niche interaction in which entering Yokai Shift while using an Awakened Yokai Weapon will still allow you to shoot out Corruption Beams when performing a strong attack, so long as you have Familiars (and possibly even Cutting Blast talisman) active:

📺 Nioh 2- Yokai+ Familiar+Sentience=???

- **Charged strong attacks** are one of the most useful tools in YS, due to the fact that they stagger enemies on hit, and can be quickly charged around Floating Amrita. After use, they will transform your Yokai form's weapon into an enhanced state briefly (See Amrita Absorption section). These moves also refund a small amount of gauge on hit.

With the hidden Shiftling skill upgrades from Otakemaru in DLC 3, they also count as ranged attacks, and so can inflict ranged hit debuffs, as well as generate anima via ranged hit anima bonuses. Each form has its own unique upgrade:

- **Brute's** Hidden skill "**Brutal Combustion**" will send out a shockwave that can inflict Scorch.
- **Phantom's** Hidden skill "**Phantasmic Burst**" fires additional projectiles.
- **Feral's** Hidden skill "**Ferocious Gale**" creates a Tornado around you for additional hits. Feral's charged strong attack is also the only one that advances you towards the enemy.
- **YS Unique abilities**. Unlocked by default and will complement the playstyle of each form:
 - **Shadowstab** for **Feral**, which works like a dodge offset, letting you dodge between hits in a combo. Your place in the combo will be retained even after repeated dodges. Feral also has its unique dodge: **Shadowstep** which, when timed with an enemies attack perfectly, will also release amrita for absorption. These dodges can be chained relatively fast, but beware that there are still gaps in its invincibility frames between dodges.
 - **Blood Moon: Yin** for **Phantom**, a ranged attack that you can aim manually, can be used for headshotting Humans or targeting specific weak points. This move will also teleport you to the enemy it hits, and like **Blood Moon: Yang**, can be cancelled with a block to stop the teleport, or ki pulse during the teleport to provide a brief period of invincibility. This move also refunds a very small amount of gauge on hit (like **Blood Moon: Yang**, it won't work if you cancel the teleport) and counts as a ranged attack for the purposes of applying ranged hit debuffs and activating anima bonus (ranged hit) which is present on all **Phantom** spirits by default.

Note: **Blood Moon: Yin** is affected by certain ranged perks such as movement speed increase while aiming, and auto target weak point.
 - **Fang Break** for **Brute**, an active parry that can interrupt most attacks in the game short of grabs, including those from yokai enemies and projectiles. Releases amrita after the parry as well. This move also restores a very small amount of gauge on a successful parry. Can also perform a second attack by pressing strong attack a second time, although this second attack will consume gauge to use.
- **Guardian Spirit skills**. You can use your Guardian Spirit attack for different things depending on your spirit. In some ways, your GS attack can feel almost like a fourth Yokai Ability.

It is worth noting that using a GS attack does consume a fair amount of gauge, but this can be reduced with the relevant shifting skill as well as melee ki consumption effects. If you have GS talismans on hand, they can help mitigate the cost by being used instead. Some uses include:

- Applying statuses such as elemental statuses
- Staggering enemies
- Launching enemies
- Breaking the guard of blocking enemies.

Each spirit has its own unique attack, so try experimenting with yours and its uses.

- **Burst Counters** are free in YS so use them often. You can also use Burst counters to cancel the YS grapple when activating it near a downed enemy, seamlessly entering YS.
 - **Brute** counter is a free attack that doesn't consume any gauge to use, and can cancel animations, re-stand downed enemies etc.
 - **Feral** and **Phantom** Counter can be used to cancel animations e.g in item cancels, or if you are about to take a hit while charging your Strong attack for instance.
- **Ki pulse** can be used to cancel animations and chain into another attack/Jitsu. You can even Ki pulse the GS attack, and use the window to use a charged triangle etc. Useful for item cancel tech etc. **Phantom** can also Ki pulse its teleport which grants a period of Iframes when you do so.
- **Interaction with Yokai pools.** Unlike in human form, Yokai pools will automatically dissipate upon contact while you are in Yokai Shift, however, this will not grant you any purification benefits. In contrast, Yokai shift attacks such as quick attacks, strong attack and charged strong attacks can be used to dispel a yokai pool while granting purification buffs e.g. Uesugi clan protection bonus. Also seems to work with Anima Bonus (Purification).

Note: There is a bug/feature that allows you to infinitely replenish your Yokai Shift Gauge by purifying Yokai pools via a certain method. This is done by performing an action that allows you to ki pulse such as a basic attack, then moving to the edge of the Yokai pool before performing the ki pulse (also works if you use a core with the "Yokai ability ki pulse" effect).

This allows you to utilise the slight AoE of ki pulse to purify the Yokai pool, while ensuring you are not stepping on the pool to dispel it. You have to be careful not to attack or step in the pools due to the aforementioned interactions those actions have with Yokai pools.

[Infinite Yokai Shift Gauge refill via purification](#)

- **Details of Yokai Shift moves:** See the below table for some extra details on YS moves including Gauge cost/recovery, number of hits, damage etc.

Note: Tested with a lvl 1 character - no gear other than starting lvl 1 sword, no stats other than default stats available from GS that require no main stat investment (Shirohami, Ame-No-Mitori, Kagewani), no prestige, no clan, no focus levels, no soul cores, attack rating of 79. Damage tests were all done on Gozuki in the first mission on **DotSam**. Vs human tests were done on a human spearman on the first mission, 2nd shrine on **DotSam**. Vs Aberrant tests were done using their arm cannon shot on **DotN**. Damage will not be consistent vs every enemy. Use the Damage values more as a comparison of the relative damage between different moves and Yokai Forms.

	Brute	Feral	Phantom
Quick Attack Combo (Shadowstab)	3 hit combo	7 hit combo (5 inputs)	3 hit combo (7 hits when weapon is transformed) (3 inputs)
	Damage: 246 + 279 + 358 (883) Transformed Damage: 320 + 363 + 465 (1148)	Damage: 79 + 83 + 122 + 195 + 59 + 59 + 265 (862) Transformed Damage: 87 + 91 + 134 + 214 + 65 + 65 + 291 (947)	Damage: 176 + 236 + 275 (687) Transformed Damage: 146 + 61 + 194 + 80 + 289 + 95 + 95 (960)
	Gauge Cost: ~3-4% (1st/2nd/3rd)	Gauge Cost: ~2% (1st/2nd) ~3% (3rd/4th) ~3-4% (5th) (4th/5th hits restore 1%)	Gauge Cost: ~2% (1st/2nd/3rd)
Strong Attack (Blood Moon: Yang)	1 hit	3 hits (1 input)	1 hit (2 hits when weapon is transformed)
	Damage: 251 Transformed Damage: 327	Damage: 83 + 83 + 14 (180) Transformed Damage: 91 + 91 + 16 (198)	Damage (Vs Gozuki): 100 Damage (Vs Human): 136 (547 on Headshot) Transformed Damage(Vs Gozuki): 120 + 120 (240) Transformed Damage(Vs Human): 164 + 164 (328) (657 on headshot)
	Can launch human	Gauge Cost:	Can Headshot

	enemies when depleting their ki	~6% (Restores 1% when hitting at max distance)	
	Gauge Cost: ~5%	~12% if used at close range to target	Gauge Cost: ~2% (Restores 1% on teleport)
Charged Strong Attack	1 hit (4 hits Brutal Combustion Inflicts Scorch)	3 hits (8 hits Ferocious Gale)	2 hits (4 hits Phantasmic Burst)
	Damage: 465 Brutal Combustion: 465 + 199 + 23 + 199 + 23 + 319 + 35 (1182 + 81)	Damage: 82 + 82 + 194 (358) Ferocious Gale: 87 + 82 + 87 + 82 + 87 + 194 + 87 + 131 (837)	Damage: 206 + 206 (412) Phantasmic Burst: 206 + 206 + 115 + 115 (642)
	Can stagger enemies on hit	Can stagger enemies on hit	Can stagger enemies on hit
	Gauge Cost: ~5-6% (restores ~3% on hit)*	Gauge Cost: ~5-6% (Restores ~1% on hit)	Gauge Cost: ~5-6% (Restores ~1% on hit)
Fang Break	1 hit (Additional 2 hits if follow up is inputted)		
	Damage: 275 + 246 + 358 (879) Transformed Damage: 357 + 320 + 465 (1142)		
	Initial hit parries enemy attacks including projectiles but not grabs, nullifying damage. Can stagger on successful parries if used close enough to an enemy		
	Gauge Cost: 3% (restores 6% on successful parry) 3% (2nd input)		
Blood Moon: Yin	1 hit		
	Damage (Vs Gozuki): 100 Damage (Vs Human): 136 (547 on Headshot) Transformed Damage (Vs Gozuki): 120 Transformed Damage (Vs Human): 164 (657 on Headshot)		
	Can be manually aimed and can Headshot		
	Gauge Cost:		

	~2 (Restores 1% on teleport)		
GS Attack	Gauge Cost: 25%	Gauge Cost: 25%	Gauge Cost: 25%
Grapple	Damage: 441 + 1380 (1821) Transformed Damage: 574 + 1794 (2368)	Damage: 294 + 144 + 144 + 144 + 826 (1552) Transformed Damage: 324 + 158 + 158 + 158 + 909 (1707)	Damage: 270 + 852 + 126 + 135 + 126 + 135 (1644) Transformed Damage: 324 + 1023 + 152 + 162 + 152 + 162 (1975)
Final Blow (Vs Human)	Damage: 1091 Transformed Damage: 1419	Damage: 228 + 236 + 282 (746) Transformed Damage: 251 + 260 + 310 (821)	Damage: 967 Transformed Damage: 1161
Dodge (Shadowstep)	Gauge Cost: 6%	Gauge Cost: 0%	Gauge Cost: ~1-2%
Block (Vs Aberrant Soldier)	Gauge Cost: ~12-13%	Gauge Cost: ~31%	Gauge Cost: ~4-5% (6-7% once Amrita Cap is reached)**
Damage Taken (Vs Aberrant Soldier)	Gauge Cost: ~38%	Gauge Cost: ~47%	Gauge Cost: ~47%
Burst Counter	Damage: 222 (153 on normal hit) Transformed Damage: 289 (200 on normal hit)	Damage: 144 Transformed Damage: 158	Damage: 176 Transformed Damage: 211
	Gauge Cost: Restores ~3%	Gauge Cost: Restores ~3%	Gauge Cost: Restores ~3%
Amrita Cap (Tested with Spirit Stones -See Amrita Absorption)	39% Recoverable Gauge	62% Recoverable Gauge	43% Recoverable Gauge
Base Duration (See Yokai Shift duration section)	~41 seconds	~47 seconds	~41 seconds
Other traits	Has Hyper armour during attacks		Has Hyper armour during attacks

*(**Brute**) Brutal Combustion shockwave doesn't restore Gauge.

(Phantom**) Seems to reduce the gauge loss for blocking some attacks from enemies in exchange

for lowering the Amrita Cap. Attacks that would guard break you do not get affected. Guard ki consumption also seems to cap with the lowest amount of gauge loss recorded being -3-4% with **Phantom** before hitting the Amrita Cap.

Amrita Absorption

While in Yokai Shift, you won't automatically absorb amrita. Instead, the Amrita will float in the air for a period of time. Managing this amrita is a crucial part of Yokai Shift in which there are two main options available to you:

- **Option 1:** While there is floating Amrita present, you can hold R1 + R2 (Ki pulse + Yokai button) in order to manually absorb the Amrita and extend the Yokai Shift gauge.
- **Option 2:** You can also hold strong attack to perform a charged strong attack which absorbs the floating amrita directly into your weapon. This will rapidly charge your Charged Strong Attack, while transforming your weapon for a period of time, but does not extend the gauge by as much as option 1, while also using some of the gauge to execute the attack.



While transformed, your weapon's basic attacks do more damage and can also execute the charged strong attack instantly for the duration of its transformation. Higher value amrita will transform the weapon for longer, with Yokai abilities seemingly allowing the weapon to stay transformed for roughly 9-10 seconds (**Doesn't seem to matter what Yokai Ability is used to generate the amrita, making cheap cores that release low amount of Amrita very useful for this purpose**).

There is a limit at which absorbing amrita will no longer extend the gauge any further. This limit varies by Yokai Form.

It seems like absorbing amrita from either method: charged triangle or R1+R2, causes you to reach the cap at the same rate, but with the latter being able to extend the gauge by a more significant amount (See: <https://youtu.be/MErEUNGsgM>). Absorbing via charged strong attacks, seems to roughly net half the gauge gains in exchange for transforming your weapon.

Note: The Amrita cap seems to scale somewhat. Using Mezuki x2 to restore the gauge while using **Brute** only restored 32% of the gauge. In comparison, using Mezuki x1, Aberrant x2 and then Kiriyoki x2 restored 38-39%, similar to the amount restored when using spirit stones.

With the notes on the amrita cap and weapon transformation in mind, it's important to properly manage and make use of the Amrita. Using amrita released via low amrita cores (e.g. Aberrant Soldier) to transform your weapon, while saving absorption via R1+R2 for cores that generate high amounts of amrita (e.g. Mezuki), or if your weapon is already transformed. You can also opt to charge the strong attack off of smaller amounts of amrita, such as amounts released from attacking, breaking weak spots, extraction etc, although the transformation will obviously be short lived.

Note: Worth mentioning that Pleiades seems to have no effect on the amount of gauge recovered via Yokai Abilities while in Yokai Shift, only the rate at which you build the gauge outside of shift.

Yokai Shift Duration

Link to Duration test sheet: [YS duration spreadsheet - Google Sheets](#)

Think of the YS gauge as a combination of health and ki. Because of this, stats (seemingly including the Toughness stat, but not Agility) that decrease ki consumption of certain actions such as blocking, dodging and attacking will help you preserve gauge time.

Each Yokai shift form appears to have a set base duration which has been tested by measuring from the moment the gauge reads as "79" (with HUD numbers turned on) to the time it takes to revert to human form (Since you are still in Yokai Shift for the duration of the gauge reading as "0").

Note: that these measurements are to the nearest second, more or less eyeballing the time via a recording. It is possible (and extremely likely) that many of these durations are decimals so take them with some degree of error.

The modifiers mentioned in the below section are also **estimates** and could use validity via further peer review. There are probably more mathematical methods for calculating the modifiers more accurately.

- For **Phantom** and **Brute**: ~41 seconds
- For **Feral**: ~47 seconds

Feral Shift appears to last the longest at about **46-47 seconds** on a fresh character with no armour. By comparison, **Brute** and **Phantom** appeared to last around **40-41 seconds**. **Feral** also seems to have a higher Amrita cap than the other two forms.
(See: <https://youtu.be/UiKelc3FUHk>)

- **Modifiers:**
 - **Feral** has its own modifier that seems to be approximately ~x1.148 (14-15%)

- Dark Realm has a innate modifier somewhere around ~x1.43 (40%)
- Being at critical health seems to have a modifier around ~x1.16 (16%)

You will find two different forms of Extended Yokai Shift: Ones that have a percentage next to them, and ones that don't. The ones that aren't percentage based don't appear to be a number of seconds etc and they seem to add to the base duration but by a much greater amount than you would expect: https://youtu.be/w_LZOU4myok.

Percentage based bonuses work as expected and multiply the base duration.

It is worth noting that Extended Yokai Shift only affects the idle rate of which the Yokai Shift Gauge decreases over time. It has no bearing on how much of the Gauge is consumed upon performing an action that costs ki or upon taking damage. As such, it is advised to combine Extended Yokai Shift with ki consumption effects or Nullify Damage effects.

Using Yokai Shift and General Flow Chart

This is the general gameplan I use with YS:

1. Ideally, transition to Yokai shift via a yokai grapple while the enemy is out of ki. If you choose to enter YS through a normal transformation, I would do so when inside a Dark Realm, as Dark Realm extends your Yokai Shift gauge, or while at critical health which also extends the gauge.

Against humans I tend to try and use an an item cancel or Burst counter to cancel my YS transformation animation while near a winded human, and then use a quick attack to down them >final blow> Charged strong/GS attack/Yokai ability/**Brute Counter**, in order to build up anima while preventing them from regaining a significant amount of their ki back, which is usually the case if you perform a grapple instead.

2. If you used a grapple, you should have enough anima to use a Yokai ability. If not, you can use quick/strong attacks, abilities such as **Fang Break**, Onmyo, Ninjitsu etc until you get enough anima to use a Yokai ability. After a grapple, you can also use the time the enemy recovers to buff or use Jitsu/GS attack to inflict statuses etc. Alternatively, you could try to release amrita through actions like **Fang Break**, **Shadowstep**, breaking weak points etc in order to take advantage of a Charged Strong attack which will help you create an opening and stagger the boss.

3. Find an opening to use your Yokai Abilities. For some like Ippon, this is a trivial matter. Others with longer animations may be harder to use without getting hit, so you may want to create an opening with a GS attack, **Fang Break**, **Blood moon** headshot etc, or wait until the enemy is recovering from an attack or you have enough space to use it safely. If amrita has been released such as from a well timed **Shadowstep**, you can also use your charged triangle to create an opening.

4. After hitting the enemy with a Yokai ability, more amrita will be released. You can use this amrita to combo straight into a charged triangle or absorb with R1+R2 to recover some gauge. When using cores that have Stagger potential, this is one of the things that makes YS strong, as you are able to stunlock enemies back to back.
5. Use the opening from the Charged Strong to set up/use a second yokai ability. Since your weapon will be transformed, you could squeeze in a few quick attacks first to build up some anima before ki pulse cancelling into another charged strong attack. If you are struggling to find an opening you could use your GS attack if it has stagger potential to create an opening
6. Hold R1-R2 to absorb amrita to extend the yokai gauge where you can. I try to hold the input during animations (e.g. During the animation of Mezuki which I know also releases a lot of amrita)
7. When you drain the opponent's ki again, use YS grapple again, or ki loop humans (attack > final blow > Yokai ability/ charged attack/ GS attack/ **Brute counter** > repeat)
8. Repeat steps 2-7

Some links to some gameplay if a visual representation is better:

- [Depths of the Underworld 26 \(Stone +9\)](#)
Tate Eboshi (6pc Susano/7pc Sarutahiko- **Brute** Shift)
- [Depths of the Underworld 26](#)
Giant Toad, Shibata, Saika (6pc Oya/7pc Tsukuyomi- **Phantom** Shift)
- [Depths of the Underworld 21 \(Stone +9\)](#)
Tsuhigumo (6pc Oya/7pc Tsukuyomi- **Phantom** Shift)
- [Dream of the Samurai- Level 1 character](#)
Yatsu-no-Kami- The Viper's Sanctum (Lvl 1 gear on a lvl 1 fresh character- **Feral** Shift)
- [Depths of the Underworld 26 \(Stone +9\)](#)
Saito Toshimitsu (6pc Oya/ 7pc Tsukuyomi-**Phantom** Shift)
- [Depths of the Underworld 26](#)
Tokichiro, Saika, Saito Toshimitsu (6pc Susano/7pc Ame- **Feral** Shift)
- [Depths of the Underworld 30](#)
Koroku, Shibata, Tate Eboshi (7pc Sarutahiko/5pc Demon Horde+/2pc Genryu- **Feral** Shift)
- [Depths of the Underworld 26](#)
Magara, Azai, Tokichiro (Dream) (7pc Sarutahiko/5pc Demon Horde+/2pc Genryu- **Phantom** Shift)

Useful Stats/Sets/Graces/Items/Spirits

- **Useful stats.** You don't strictly need to dedicate your sets to have a competent Yokai Shift. Most stats that affect human form will still work in Yokai form with a few exceptions, such as crit hp effects. Damage taken -% also still work, but are less effective at mitigating damage to the Yokai Shift gauge likely due to the Yokai Shift gauge not just being affected by health damage. Toughness also appears to still work while in Yokai Shift and will reduce gauge loss on block. Agility does not appear to have any effect.

That being said, some desirable effects to look out for to help with Yokai Shift include:

- Anima and Anima bonuses- Will work the same way they do in human form. More Max anima means you could potentially hold more charges of Yokai Abilities.
- Yokai Ability Damage- Since Yokai abilities are a central part of playing Yokai Shift, increasing their damage will naturally be beneficial.
- Nullify Damage (Yokai Shift)- Can stack up to 57% if on all three cores at max rank. Alongside Protection, especially Uesugi clan's protection effect, this stat can help make your Yokai Shift more durable. With that being said, due its random nature, it is ill advised to try and use this stat to tank hits, instead treat it more of a safety hit while you still try to evade/block/counter damage. Prevention is the best medicine.
- Pleiades- Boosts the rate at which you charge the Amrita gauge from all sources. Can be found in different strengths, with Saorise's GS skill Pleiades being the strongest. Incredibly useful for getting back into Yokai Shift.
- Extended Yokai Shift- Nice to have, but may gradually become less desirable over the course of the game where the main cause of your shift ending is taking damage or via ki consumption, which Extended Yokai Shift does not help with. It is recommended to combine it with Nullify Damage and ki consumption effects where possible. Can be found with either a percentage or a flat numerical value (see the Yokai Shift Duration section for more details on what those numbers actually mean).
- Ki consumption- Reduces the amount of gauge used on YS melee attacks, dodges and blocks etc for the respective ki consumption stat.
- Ult Courage- Like Ki consumption, this will reduce the gauge consumption of attacks while in Yokai Shift
- Increased attack buffs/Melee Damage/Melee Ki Damage etc- Most generic damage effects will affect Yokai Shift melee attack damage/ ki damage. This includes grapple, charged strong attack, unique skills etc.

- Other more niche effects can include stats like Critical Yokai Shift, Movement stats: Running Speed/Faster Movement Speed (X)/Movement Speed (Yokai Shift) etc.

Pre-dlcs and grace sets, there are very few sets with Yokai Shift centric bonuses. Most sets that will provide a benefit to Yokai Shift will be focused on general Anima generation rather than specifically for Yokai Shift, although this will benefit Yokai Shift by allowing you to fill the Amrita Gauge faster and your Soul Cores while transformed.

- **Useful sets.** The addition of Ethereal gear also added upgraded forms of some of the sets that have a unique “+” effect. Several of these also have Yokai Shift/Anima Charge related effects:
 - Genryu’s set bonus “The Crime of Patricide” with Extended Yokai Shift +10 and Amrita Gauge Charge +15% as its 2pc and 3pc bonuses. Easy to slot in one piece of this just for the +10 EYS.
 - Kohoku Master’s set bonus “Saruyasha’s Valor” includes +10% Amrita Gauge charge and +10% Anima charge. One of the few options available before graces. The anima charge effect can help power your yokai abilities to allow faster gauge buildup, and more frequent use while in YS.
 - Suzuka’s set bonus “A Deadly Conviction” has Yokai Ability Charge (Yokai Shift) +20% as its 5pc bonus. The Ethereal version of this set gains **Anima Charge +20%** as a 5pc bonus. **(The First Samurai).**
 - Dreaming Demon’s set bonus “Shadows of a Dream” has Extended Yokai Shift +20 as its 4pc bonus, Amrita bonus (Inflict corrupted) B+ as its 6pc, and Yokai Ability Damage (Yokai Shift) +20% as its 7pc bonus **(The First Samurai).**
 - Demon Horde’s set bonus “Demon Incarnate” gains **Extended Yokai Shift +25** as a 5pc bonus. The largest +EYS effect available on a single set and at only 5pc. Can be combined with a single piece of Genryu for its +10 EYS while still leaving you available to slot in a 7pc bonus. **(Originally available as a pre order bonus. Unsure of its availability now or in the Complete Edition of Nioh 2)**
 - Yoshitsune’s set bonus “Kurama Swordmaster” has Yokai Ability Damage (Feral) +15% as a 5pc. The Ethereal version gains **Blood of the Yokai** as a 7pc bonus **(The Tengu’s Disciple).**
 - Sarutahiko’s Grace is one of the strongest grace sets for Yokai Shift with the additional 2.0 Anima from its 3pc bonus, Yokai Ability Damage (Yokai Shift) +20% from its 4pc bonus, Yokai Ability Charge (Yokai Shift) +20% from its 5pc bonus, and Blood of the Yokai from its 7pc bonus **(Dream of the Nioh).**

Many generic (e.g. damage/ki damage focused) graces also work well with Yokai Shift e.g.

- Ame-no-Uzume - Death Dancer 7pc bonus (**Dream of the Wise**)
- Susano - Versatility 6pc bonus (**Dream of the Wise**)
- Ninigi - Melee Ki damage (**Dream of the Nioh**)
- Oyamatsumi - Damage Taken Halved (Unscathed) and Life +30% (**Depths of the Underworld**)
- Shinatsuhiko- Melee Ki Consumption (**Depths of the Underworld**)

Some of these graces focus around building stacks which can be both built and maintained while in BOTH forms, providing a good synergy for players wanting to make use of both states. Others are very general stat boosts that still work while in Yokai Shift or when synergized in some way/

Oyamatsumi for instance, will reduce the gauge lost if hit due to its Damage Taken Halved (Unscathed), but its +30% Life will also strengthen the durability of Uesugi's Protection which can serve to nullify damage while in YS. You can then further augment this using x3 Nullify Damage (Yokai Shift) stats on your soul cores, creating quite a tanky Yokai Shift form.

In the case of Susano, it pairs excellently with 7pc Sarutahiko due to Versatility being 6pc bonus, allowing you get both Versatility and Blood of the Yokai. Several moves while in Yokai Shift also count as active skills:

- Yokai Shift Final Blow (Independent stack for human form and each yokai form)
- Yokai Shift Grapple (Independent stack for human form and each yokai form)
- Burst Counter (Separate stack for each form)
- Charged Strong Attack (Separate stack for each form)
- **Fang Break**
- **Brutal Combustion** (likely a glitch, but immediately cancelling **Brute** charged strong with a Yokai ability will cause brutal combustion's shockwave to generate a stack)
- **Blood Moon: Yin**
- **Blood Moon: Yang**
- **Useful Clans** include:
 - Maeda - Augment Yokai Shifts already powerful grapple further.
 - Uesugi - Protection effect to help nullify damage taken while in YS. If combined with Nullify Damage YS, when Nullify Damage activates it will also prevent your protection buff from taking damage.
- **Useful Spirits**. Pretty much every Spirit can be used with Yokai Shift although some have more useful attributes or traits that could be useful to look out for:
 - Makami- **Brute** Spirit. Melee ki consumption, Yokai Ability Damage (All), Final blow damage, a GS attack which is fast and staggers on hit while inflicting scorch. Downsides include its attunement limit which is set to 20, the lowest value possible, although there are still extremely effective core loadouts that work well with this setup.

- Yumehami- **Phantom** Spirit. Melee Ki damage and Extended Yokai Shift +20%. Relatively low attunement at 21.
 - Kuruma Tengu- **Feral** Spirit. Yokai Ability Damage (Purified Enemy) and Active skill ki Consumption. Purity Spirit attack. 22 Attunement.
 - Sohaya- **Feral** Spirit. Amazing GS attack that has great tracking and inflicts Purity. Highest attack modifier of all Spirits. Nullify Confusion. 26 Attunement, tied for the highest in the game.
 - Baku- **Brute** Spirit. Anima Charge, Corruption Accumulation, Melee vs Corrupted. Great GS attack that produces a lingering cloud which inflicts Corruption and Paralysis. 26 Attunement, the highest amount in the game.
 - Ho-oh- **Phantom** Spirit. Purified Accumulation, Melee vs Purified enemy. Great GS attack that inflicts lingering Purity fire on the ground. 26 Attunement.
 - Hiyobishin- **Brute** Spirit. Yokai Ability Damage (Brute) as its shared effect. Useful as a secondary Spirit.
 - Nekomata- **Feral** Spirit. Yokai Ability Damage (Feral) as its shared effect. Useful as a secondary Spirit.
 - Janomecho- **Feral** Spirit. Auto-Charge Amrita Gauge (Critical) passively restores Amrita Gauge overtime so long as you are at Critical Health (30% or less) (Not affected by Pleiades. Damage Bonus (Health lost) will also affect Yokai Shift damage.
 - Hakutaku- **Phantom** Spirit. Yokai Ability Damage (Phantom) as its shared effect. Useful as a secondary Spirit.
 - Saoirse- **Phantom** Spirit. Useful to have as a secondary purely for the Pleiades effect granted by her GS attack. She offers one of the fastest paths to charging (and recharging) your Amrita Gauge, allowing for frequent transformations.
- **Useful items.** Remember you can still use items, Onmyo, Ninjitsu etc while transformed.
 - Onmyo, Ninjitsu and other items are still options for inflicting statuses and confusion. Elemental shots, familiars, feathers for item cancels etc. If you have stats like Anima bonus Onmyo/Ninjitsu hit, you want to be using jitsu as another method of building anima. Guardian Spirit Talismans also allow you to use your GS attack without consuming Gauge and, depending on spirit, can offer you a pathway to inflicting Corruption or Purity.

- Spirit Surge can be used to enhance the ki damage your Yokai Shift melee attacks and burst counters do (about 30% increase).
- Soul leech could be used to give yourself a burst of anima when entering Shift.
- Last Gambit still provides its damage buff while in Yokai Shift, while setting you at Critical HP, granting you the additional Yokai Shift duration bonus for being at Critical Health.

Other Notes

-Yokai Shift won't end if you are locked in certain animations such as a yokai ability or grapple. If you haven't reached the amrita cap yet, you can trade hits using a yokai ability while the gauge is at 0% and then still absorb amrita to recover some gauge. You can even lock yourself into the jitsu casting animations to prevent Yokai Shift from ending. Items such as Rakansan Coin are especially good for this.

(see: <https://youtu.be/8hJsW2TZjDY>)

-Max Life and Ki values have no effect on duration.

-Crit effects do not take effect while in YS, including effects like Anima Bonus (Critical Amrita). Unscathed effects are active for the full duration of YS provided you transform with full health.

-Each Yokai form has a unique animation when using Oni-bi soul cores.

-Shockwave Talisman has no effect while in Yokai Shift.

-**Toughness** - Red Demon armour Vs Red Demon armour + Li clan improved ki consumption on Guard vs the same cannon shot- seems to show that Toughness is taking effect. Was not affecting gauge loss on getting hit.

-**Agility** - no effect on melee/ dodge ki consumption, movement speed or dodge range in YS (even D agility). Melee ki consumption stat does have an effect.

-Ailments and enemy buffs that increase ki damage - Corruption, Purity, Curse, Berserk (Increases ki consumption but not ki damage taken) don't appear to increase gauge loss on hit

-Block stat from weapon affects guard.

- Ki Pulse on block from Ultimate Strength works while in YS, as long as the ki pulse comes from a Yokai Ability with Yokai Ability Ki Pulse equipped. This method also grants the ki pulse stance buffs for Yokai Shift which is normally not possible.

- Ult Courage appears to work while in Yokai Shift, reducing the gauge consumption of melee attacks.

-Taking damage while in Yokai Shift does not void Crusher title attempts.

-Buffs (and Debuffs) will also be maintained between forms, so you can apply buffs before entering shift.

-Avoid taking damage. Damage is the biggest threat to your YS gauge. Blocking and dodging are both still options. You can also stack nullify damage (YS), or use things such as Protection talisman, Damage taken halved (unscathed), Uesugi Clan etc to act as a safety net. This also exemplifies the importance of stagger options, as an enemy that can't fight back, can't hit you.